A Red Moonstone Shines Brightly [Updated Version]

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A Red Moonstone Shines Brightly [Updated Version]

by lefemmerouge

Summary

Cass thought about her past as she walked across the rolling hills on the edge of the last kingdom in the Ever Realm she hadn't visited yet, named Enchancia. Suddenly, a wormhole opens in front of her. She steps through it without realizing.

When she enters the new world, she soon meets an unlikely companion, a former (and well-known) international thief. Both end up bonding with one another even though they come from vastly different circumstances. What comes next is up to them...

Notes

Hey everyone! I originally posted this fic on AO3 in early January 2024 but I decided to cross-post it here after the recent AO3 downages. I first cross-posted the original version of this fic on here in December 2024 and revised it as a result. The original fic was inspired by "Sandiego's Seven" by ArtyWrites. The below paragraphs are the original A/N, but without links to the awful Reddit (which is an utter cespool), while changing it to reflect it was posted here. Anyway, I was inspired to post this fic now because it fulfills the following prompt on a certainn sitee: "any, any/any, temperature." The word temperature was briefly mentioned in one line of the fic: "...There were also internal climate controls to make sure it was the right temperature inside the room." I aimed to add in more indicators throughout the fic talking about the temperature. The original version of the fic was 4,470 words, while the version on a certain sit was 5,041, an increase of 571 words (or about 12.8%). I further realized that this fic is a sort of isekai, at least for Cass and the summary was updated, along with other changes which made this fic even stronger than the original. When posting it here, I further revised it yet again.

The interest in the Red Moonstone ship, of Carmen and Cass, on Reddit, fanart, and a mention of this on the Shipping Wiki fandom page for Cass got me interested in this ship in the first place, and made me want to write this story. The same ship is mentioned on Carmen's page too. This

was the first ever Red Moonstone fic on a certain fanfic site. For a similar fic, see my "Cassandra and the Catgirl from the Sky" fic which I published earlier on that site, and recently cross-posted on here. It is not listed in the inspiration section as it isn't really an inspiration for this one. Also, I saved a copy of this fic on the Internet Archive.

As always, comments, and concrit, are welcome and appreciated.

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by A Red Moonstone Shines Brightly by lefemmerouge

One year has passed, but... I am riddled with guilt every day. Sometimes it feels like I do not age and that time has not passed.

Yet my suffering continues. While I still feel I was in the right, I know what I did to Rapunzel and that I hurt her. I had to get away from it all. I couldn't let her toxic positivity get to me... I had to get away... away from her, away from Corona, away from it all!

I need to find my own way in the world, my own way in the universe.

Cass thought about her past as she walked across the rolling hills on the edge of Enchancia, the last kingdom in the Ever Realm she visited on her long journey. She had been wandering from place to place since she had left Corona and did not want to return there, at least until she changed herself. She felt that would be wrong. She loved the feel of the cool breeze on her skin. It felt so good. Out of nowhere, a wormhole opened in front of her. She walked through it without realizing, since the cool breeze continued. She hummed to herself and closed her eyes, happily skipping as she went. She felt the wind blowing against her brown hair. Everything seemed like it was going her way.

When she opened her eyes, she was astonished. She was standing on top of a black gooey substance, embedded with pebbles. It covered the ground. It had strange white and yellow markings denoting something, although she didn't know exactly what. It was like nothing she had ever seen in her entire life. A metal monstrosity came hurtling her direction. She drew her sword and took a defensive stance. She would not die. Not now.

"Stop, heathen! You shall not pass!" she shouted. Her movement did nothing to stop the horseless chariot from speeding toward her. A window opened by some miracle, perhaps even by magic, she gathered. She heard a deafening voice.

"Get out of the road, damn lady!" The tone was *angry*. Cass was confused. She was unsure what she had done wrong. She decided to ignore the yelling person. It was clearly a lout and she paid it no mind.

She stood her ground. Right then and there, she started to sing that she had nothing left to lose. Openly singing on a busy roadway was *unusual* in this city, to say the least. Unexpectedly, a lady in a bright red trenchcoat and fedora grabbed her off the street. Before she knew it, she was flying above the ground and through the air thanks to the woman's glider backpack. She had no idea why this lady had grabbed her from the ground. The landscape was markedly different from anything she had ever seen. There were tall buildings with windows which stretched into

the sky, almost like they were scraping the clouds. She put her sword back into its sheath. This woman *did not* seem to be a threat.

The glider soon came to a stop. It gently reached the ground. In the past, the lady had crashed when carrying her former crime school buddy. That scenario did not replay itself. She controlled her movements better *this time.*

Cass looked up and saw a ramshackle building. The name "Carmen Outerwear" was emblazoned on the front. After collapsing her hangar backpack, the lady who had saved her suddenly turned her direction. Her fierce blue-gray eyes stared at Cass. She came closer. Her auburn hair was blowing in the wind. In some ways, this woman reminded her of someone she used to know, someone she had grown very fond of over the years, someone she felt that she had hurt deeply, and someone she wanted to reconnect with in a healthier way that involved re-building trust by not treating another person as second-best and without any hierarchy.

She was not aware that in this world, thousands of miles away, in a densely populated land strip, thousands of people were being murdered by a militarily superior force in continual acts of genocide. These brutal attacks resulted in massive displacement and a shattered society. This was paired with the spread of disease, electricity blackout, food insecurity, and only three crossings, on land, allowing people to come and go. This now-hellish place, known as Gaza, was many times worse than anything she had caused in Corona. The same people aimed to do the same to those living in a country with beautiful fertile coastal plains and mountain ranges, named Iran and Lebanon after mountains and ancient written inscriptions. It would baffle her mind if she knew about the horrifying butchery happening to people thousands of miles from where she currently stood.

Since she didn't know about those horrors, at the present, only one thing concerned her now: *who was this person in front of her? Why did she seem so...familiar?*

"Who are you?" the lady demanded. Cass did not know how to answer her. She stepped back warily, unsure of what to make of this woman. There was no doubt that the woman was the epitome of fashion and beauty. Cass couldn't help but be drawn toward her, although she wasn't sure why. Her face started to feel warm. What was happening to her? Conflicted with what she should say, she fumbled. "I...uh...am Cassandra...I have a sword and...I'm not afraid to use it!"

The lady laughed heartily. It had been one of the funniest things she had heard all day. *A person she had saved from the street was threatening her? How absurd!* She attempted to calm down the situation. "Ah, yes,

swords, the weapon of choice for a lady with black hair. It suits you well. I'm sorry miss but I do not want to fight with you, not today."

Cass nodded. She continued to be uncertain about the intentions of this woman. Without a doubt, she could have drawn her sword right then and there. Considering her options, she decided to stand down, this time.

"Fine...I'll follow you...but if you do anything sneaky, I'll have to strike back...with force!"

Whether she would act on this threat was questionable. More likely than anything else, it was a bluster to put this woman on edge. However, it didn't work, not in the slightest, if that had been her intention in the first place.

The woman laughed once again. "Oh, Miss Cassandra," she began, "come inside into my former hideout." She paused. "but *don't* you tell anyone about it," she warned.

Continuing to be wary, she followed behind this woman, but kept her eyes open. This could be evil trickery. Maybe this was all a nightmare. Nothing made sense. The woman stopped and turned around. She outstretched her hand.

"Sorry for not introducing myself earlier. I'm Carmen Sandiego. You can just call me Carmen."

As she smiled, Cass shook her hand, which felt so warm and inviting. Despite that feeling and the new sensations coursing through her body, she remained incredibly skeptical of this mysterious woman.

Taking out a metal key from her pocket, Carmen unlocked the door and walked in. The ground floor had a workshop for Ivy, a laundry room, and a gym. She led Cass through the building and into the living room. In the back of her mind, Cass believed that someone had planned this whole thing in order to trap her once and for all. Every day, she suffered from the residual effects of Zhan Tiri's mental manipulation, leading to a certain level of paranoia.

What happened next was something she never expected. Carmen felt relieved. She put her keys on a table and pointed to a puffy, cushioned piece of furniture.

"Make yourself at home, Cassandra...I have to change out of these clothes as it's been hot as blazes today, although the cool breeze has been nice. I'll be back in a second. Please don't go anywhere."

Stunned at the sudden hospitality, Cass smiled weakly. She wasn't sure what to think about this woman and her posh hideout. She had no idea

where she was. Even so, one thing was clear: she wasn't in Enchancia anymore.

As Carmen went into the bedroom, she changed into more comfortable, and casual, clothes. Discreetly, she slipped into the study/storage area. She talked to her hacker friend in hushed tones. She didn't want Cass to hear.

"Player, I need an assist here." Not sure what she meant, the Canadian kid asked, "What is it, Red?" Now fully dressed, in almost record time, perhaps as a side effect of having to get ready super quickly when she attended crime school for a shadowy organization named VILE, she took out her earbuds. She turned on the *video call feature*, surprising Player. He hadn't expected to see her face.

"I uh...rescued this woman from being hit by a car this morning. She drew a sword and was about to fight it I think? I found it really bizarre."

Player didn't know what to tell her. *Why had Carmen even rescued this woman? How did she know this woman could be trusted?* Player shook his head. He didn't know what to think about what she had done.

"Red, I'm stunned. Couldn't you have just dropped her off at a police station or something? Why did you take her in?"

Carmen rolled her eyes. *Didn't Player know that the police couldn't be trusted?* She grumbled.

"Come on, Player, don't ya remember when it was revealed that cops in this city were sending racist, sexist, and homophobic texts to each other, and a bunch of cases were compromised?"

Exasperated, she added, "I'd trust a pig rolling in mud more than these damn cops. They are corrupt to the core."

Player backed off. The last thing he wanted was for Carmen to be angry at him. He tried to move the conversation back to the original subject: the woman she had took in.

"So...Red, did you call me because you want me to look up more about...*this woman*?"

Carmen nodded. She surreptitiously snapped a quick photograph of Cass, who continued lying on the couch in the living room and was yawning while she stretched her arms. Player teased Red.

"She totally seems like your type, Red..."

Carmen looked at him with a scowl. Her face was red as a tomato. She was starting to feel warm across her body, especially in her face. *How could he even say that! It was so embarrassing!*

"Yeah sure, Player." She then added, as an aside, "oh, and her name is Cassandra. Let me know if you find anything. I'll keep you posted if I learn *anything else*."

After getting off the video call, Player realized something odd. *Carmen was back at the hideout again?* He found that weird. He thought that she had taken a break from all of that. *Hadn't she gone out on her own, wanting to forge her own path? He shrugged.* He expected her to call him back. He kicked himself for not bringing this up. One day, he wanted to go to the hideout too. Even so, he knew that wouldn't happen unless he made an excuse for it.

Meanwhile, back on the couch, Cass held a black object with a bunch of colored buttons on it in her hand. In all her time in Corona, and traveling across Ever Realm, she had never seen such a device. Curious, she pressed the red button. She heard a sizzling sound. A picture appeared in front of her eyes on a rectangular black box, apparently called a screen. Sound blared out of the screen, screaming into her ears. It was so loud that she felt disoriented. She turned away and gathered enough courage to face the noise, breathing deeply. She pulled out her sword and raised it. "I will not let this infernal box dictate my life! Stop this instant!" Her words had no effect.

As she was about to strike the final blow and cut the device in half, Carmen bolted out of the door. She pulled Cass down to the ground, knocking her sword to the ground. "Unhand me, woman!" she yelled. Shaking her head, Carmen could do nothing but laugh. Cass continued to struggle, attempting to escape, like a house cat that didn't want to be held, baring claws and attempting to scratch.

Annoyed, she asked, "why are you laughing! This *isn't funny*. This...device...whatever it is, is hurting my ears! I want to make it stop."

Carmen carefully picked up the sword, which was sitting on the ground. She helped Cass to the couch and breathed deeply. This woman was more trouble than she had anticipated. *Where had she come from, anyway?*

"Okay, I'm gonna need you to calm down a bit, Cassandra." She then pressed the red button on the controller. The screen went dark. Cass felt a little better now. No longer were those sounds pouring into her ears. Even so, she remained perplexed and a bit dizzy. *What was the strange black rectangle on the wall? How was it connected to the device?* She had no idea. Before she could say anything, Carmen pointed to the rectangle. "That's a television." She picked up the controller and said,

"and this is a remote. It turns on the TV. You can watch movies, shows, and whatever you want there...it's the ultimate entertainment device."

Although Carmen's explanation helped, Cass still had no clue how any of it worked. She sighed. She lay down on the couch. It was as comfortable as any of the plush couches and chair in the Corona castle where she had sometimes lazed about. For everything that Raps put her through, treating her as someone who was second-best, someone whose identity was subsumed within her own, and everything else, she couldn't forget the luxurious accommodations. Although Raps had undoubtedly devalued her in many ways, she knew that Raps, on some level, still cared about her, even when they were apart. *What would Raps think of her now?*

"I'm sorry," Cass began. "Everything about this world is new and different from what I'm used to. I've never seen this device you call...a television...or the remote that controls it."

This made Carmen very concerned. *Where was this woman from anyway? Could she be someone brainwashed by VILE to take her out for the last time? Had she made a mistake in letting her into the hideout?* She had to know more.

"So, Cass...can I call you that?" Cass nodded. "...What is the place you are used to? Where's your...home base?"

Processing the questions slowly, Cass responded to her carefully. While Carmen was unsure about her, she was not completely convinced she could trust Carmen, at least not at this point. She decided to be forthright, in hopes she could get home. She wanted to see Raps again. "I'm from the kingdom of Corona...it's ruled...or should I say will be ruled...by a girl with auburn hair, Rapunzel...and her husband Eugene."

Carmen started to say something. Cass interrupted her, and continued. "After some...things happened, I don't live there anymore...I've been traveling on my own for about a year to get my head straight...and forge my own path."

This made Carmen even more interested. *She almost seemed to be doing the same thing as her!* Maybe they had even more in common. She decided to ask her more about herself. Instead of telling Player secretly about Cass, perhaps she could introduce her to him, virtually. Why couldn't she just introduce her openly? So she decided to ask more questions as a start. "So, where is this Corona, located?"

Without much thought, Cass responded "why, in the Ever Realm, of course. Don't you know about it?" Carmen shrugged. She had never heard of either one. *Had this woman been living under a rock?*

"I'm...not familiar with...that place...can you point it out to me?" she asked, remaining inquisitive. She picked up a wooden stand near the window, which had a brass metal footer. It felt a bit warm from the sun's rays which had touched it. Such a stand was designed for a globe and mobile enough to carry around a living space. While the electronic maps that Player came up with were helpful, she liked this globe much better, especially since elevation was built into it. You could, with your hands, feel how low, or high, an area was. Also, it could be used to play the globe-spinning "where your finger lands game" or what her friends called, in jest, "where in the world is Carmen Sandiego."

Cass stared at the globe, spun it around, searching intently. *What were all these lines, borders, and symbols? Why were they there? Where was Corona?* She started to panic. "Corona isn't on here...are you absolutely sure this globe is the right one?" This puzzled Carmen. *How could she not point to her homeland? Who was Cass anyway?* This woman worried her, more than anything. "Yeah, it's right. It's a globe of Earth I bought at an antique shop last year."

This scared Cass. *What did Carmen mean by "Earth"? What was this world she spoke about?* To make sure her ears weren't deceiving her, she asked a follow-up question. "Are you absolutely sure it's Earth?" Carmen looked at her strangely. *Why would Cass ask this? Didn't she live on the same planet as her?* "Yes, it is," she said matter-of-factly. She wanted to be as honest as she could with her. The way Cass was saying things made her worried.

Not wanting to bother Carmen with any further questions, she accepted what Carmen said as the reality. She had no idea how she had come to Earth. While she would have asked Varian about it, he wasn't there to help. She had no way of getting in contact with him. She felt lost and untethered from reality. *What if she never saw her dad again, or...even Raps? How in the world could she even get back to Corona...or the Ever Realm?* She had no clue

There was a long, uncomfortable silence between Cass and Carmen. Each of them waited for the other to say something. An idea came into Carmen's head. Maybe they could relax in the sunroom on the roof of her former headquarters. It was only two floors up. Perhaps the warm temperature of that room would do Cass some good. She always went there when she needed to relax.

She quickly grabbed Cass's right hand and ran toward the elevator. It was old and had a metal grating which you had to close manually. "I'm gonna show you one of my favorite rooms within this entire place." Hopping inside the moving metal box scared Cass, but...it amazed her at the same time. *What were the systems that caused it to move? Why were the dials lighting up like there were candles hidden behind them?* It

fascinated her. Although she might not act like this normally, her keen interest in technology came from spending time with her good friend, Varian. Although some people may have thought she had romantic feelings for him, she never once had feelings for men, including him.

Carmen stepped out of the elevator, still holding the right hand of Cass, and sped up the stairs. Not surprisingly, although the building was somewhat accessible, thanks to twin elevators from the ground floor and third floor, no elevator reached the roof. That could only be accessed by climbing the stairs. They soon reached the lush sunroom, an enclosed space filled with daylight. It had many views of San Francisco. Cass felt the change temperature, immediately.

Alternatively called solariums, conservatories, sun parlors, or sun porches, these rooms had the advantage of bringing in outside light while serving as a shelter from adverse weather. They often featured passive solar heating, with the sun’s rays easily illuminating the room. In some cultures, these rooms were secluded and partially enclosed within a garden. In the case of this hideout, the sunroom had the dual purpose of collecting sunlight for warmth and offering scenic views. Most of the walls were composed of framed glass. There were even some internal climate controls to make sure it was the right temperature inside the room, so it could serve as a sort-of greenhouse.

Cass was amazed. The views, the design, and the layout were one thing. When entering the room, she felt calmness rush over her. She bowed her head. Then she delicately kissed Carmen's hand. "Thank you for bringing me to such a wonderful place...This is the first time I've ever stepped foot in a room…like this…in my entire life." Carmen's face, often a rakuda brown color, became warm and flushed, even a little reddish. She was totally unprepared for this woman doing this to her. Starting to stutter, Cass interrupted her. "I'm...sorry...it's a royal habit. I was a lady-in-waiting for a princess, you know."

Hearing that made Carmen perk up. *Who was Cass, really?* She knew that Cass came from the Ever Realm, and, more specifically, from a kingdom named Corona within it. She surmised that Cass had some feelings for the princess she served in the kingdom. Otherwise, her life was a complete mystery. She wanted to learn more about her. That was only natural, right?

At the same time, she wanted to put her new friend at ease. *Who was she to ask Cass about her life in this other world, as she termed it?* She saw in Cass someone trying to find their place in the universe. That really resonated with her. "I can relate...I grew up on an island of thieves...and I later realized they were only out for themselves." Unsure of how her new lady friend would react, she glanced over at her. The hazel eyes of Cass were intently staring at her.

Clearing her throat, she continued. "I became a thief who steals from other thieves." Cass chuckled. What she had experienced was much worse. She almost acted like it was a bad memory.

"Oh, that's small potatoes. My mother kidnapped this princess, Rapunzel. I was raised by the royal guard." She breathed deeply. She felt a weight lifted from her chest after confiding in Carmen. She felt very comfortable around her.

"And, well, she had the gall to say we were sisters or *some shit*. I fucking hated that...she devalued me so much."

She shook her head and sighed. She wanted to explain herself more. She felt comfortable explaining this to her.

"So, I tried to make my own destiny, but the rage, anger, and hate I felt for her was manipulated by an evil sorceress, Zhan Tiri. Luckily, she was defeated, but I *couldn't* stay in Corona anymore...not after what I did."

Carmen didn't know exactly what she was talking about, or who "Rapunzel" or "Zhan Tiri" were. Even so, she could sympathize with what she was going through. Surely, she hadn't been involved in anything like what Cass had gone through. She hadn't tortured, kidnapped, extorted, vandalized, blackmailed, or been otherwise cruel to multiple people. However, when she had been mind controlled by VILE for many months, she stole for them repeatedly. Since then, she had worked hard to make amends for what she did. She imagined that Cass did the same thing, in her own world, and in her own way.

Just then, a thought came to her. She snatched her phone from the nearby table. Turning her head to Cass, she asked, "can I take a photo?" Cass shrugged. She had no idea what was happening and shrugged. Carmen took that as an agreement, and quickly snapped a photo. Rubbing her eyes, Cass was baffled by this tiny lighted box. She picked it up and studied it intently. *What was this infernal device? And what is a "photo"?*

"Uh, Carmen, what is *that*…thing?" she asked, pointing at the phone. Carmen chuckled. She really worried about Cass. *Where had this girl been living?*

"It can take photographs…call people…send messages…and other stuff."

Cass continued scratching her head. The only word that she recognized was the word "message." She had heard it in the past. People would send them in written form.

She said innocently, "so I could write a letter to someone with that... device?" Carmen nodded. There wasn't time to teach her digital literacy

or anything like that. Instead, she wanted Player to see her.

"Can I introduce you…virtually…to my friend, Player?...he's *a hacker*." Cass didn't know what words like "virtual" meant. She thought that Carmen's friend must be either a chump who does things without any skill or a person who cleared brush in a wilderness. Quickly, the screen flashed. A young teen with deep brown hair, wearing a gray-red jacket, navy blue shorts, and gray sneakers stared back. He was not what she thought a hacker would look like. She was puzzled.

"Hey, Red," the teen answered. Cass had no idea who this person was or how in the world he could be talking with them. She looked at him with an expression of utter confusion. Player could tell immediately.

"So...you are the Cassandra that Red told me about," he said.

She quickly became defensive. *How could this...damn kid...know her name? Who the heck did he think he was?* "How do you know that? *Who* told YOU?" Carmen held Cass's hand, then softly whispered in her ear. She told her that Player was her friend. She added that she had told him about her in order to hopefully learn more about her. This put Cass at ease, although she remained a bit wary. Her face even felt a bit warm after Carmen talked into her ear.

"Sorry for that…," she said. "so, I'm adjusting to this strange place, with all these devices you call phones, televisions, these glass fixtures with weird metal pieces inside, photographs, and mechanical horseless chariots." She added, "I didn't think a so-called 'hacker' would be a person sitting in a chair and looking at a bunch of glowing black boxes...this is all new to me..." Her voice then trailed off. Player didn't know what to say. He had never met, virtually or in-person, anyone like Cass. She almost seemed to be, in his estimation, from another time or place. His supposition was completely correct.

He started asking questions. "So, Cassandra, I searched across a bunch of databases and found *nothing* about you…it's almost like you are a ghost."

Cass took extreme offense to when he said that. First of all, he knew her name. *Now, he was saying that she didn't exist!* Suddenly, Carmen interjected, surprising not only Cass, but Player. She wanted to make sure her friend was calm.

"She's from some kingdom named Corona, in the Ever Realm and was a...uh...servant...I think...for this princess named Rapunzel."

He nodded. With both of them staring at him intently, he quickly typed on his keyboard. He sighed and put up his arms in defeat. He was missing something, but did not know what.

"I can't find anything...*no country or world* named Ever Realm...no princess named Rapunzel...there's a bunch of coronas out there, either outer atmosphere of the Sun, a type of beer, a software company, a carbonated drink, a card game, some songs, a type of virus, and the name of a car...but *no kingdom*."

Cass grumbled. What Player said confirmed her suspicions: that she had come to this strange planet named Earth, as Carmen called it. She shook her head. She had to accept this reality.

"I guess I'm stuck here then. From what I last remember, I was on the outskirts of this kingdom called Enchancia and suddenly ended up in front of some horseless carriage riding on some weird black gooey surface...I don't know what that was... then *A person yelled at me*, I pulled out my sword, Carmen brought me here... and well, that's it."

Player tried to reassure her. He didn't want her to lose hope. Maybe they could get her back to Corona, somehow. "I'll do what I can to help you. I'll ask around."

Cass smiled. That's exactly what she wanted to hear. "Thank you, Player." The video call ended. Carmen shut off the screen and stashed the phone in her pants pocket. Only seconds later, Cass leaned in close. She had to thank her new friend somehow. She'd do what Raps did to her so many times. Without much thought, she gave her a loud smooch on the cheek. She whispered, "I'm glad you talked to your friend. I hope he can help."

Carmen's body became warm. Her face became as red as a ripe raspberry. Her heart began beating faster. Her pupils began to dilate. Her palms became sweaty. She felt weird. She hadn't felt like this in her entire life. This seemed different. As her left eye turned to Cass, she knew what it all meant. She put her arm around Cass and softly replied, again without thinking about it too much, "I'd do anything for you...I'm so relieved you are here...with me."

Cass would have, in the past, shirked away, but this time, she did not. She had, even when she has control over the Blue Moonstone and was manipulated by Zhan Tiri, one goal: to gain more respect and self-worth, something which had been denied to her. She had unloaded her frustrations into actions that seemed irrational but were fully justified. In a moment of deep longing, she hugged Carmen back and said, "you are *my Red Moonstone*, grounding me with your love and protection...and for that, I am forever grateful." Carmen's face became even warmer as she started to blush uncontrollably. Why had she said this? She pushed down that thought. Her words just felt right to say.

They continued to embrace one another, clearly enjoying the company of each other. While they had only met, their personal connection became deeper with each passing minute and hour, even though they came from

different worlds. Any challenges ahead for them would be something they would approach together. Their lives would be *intertwined more* than either could have imagined. What came next would be up to them...

End Notes

The beginning of this fic loosely adapts the season 5 opening of Samurai Jack, which is spoken by Jack himself. I used this guide by Moooooshier to help with tags for this story. I further summarized information from the "Sunroom" Wikipedia article. And yes, people with darker skin can blush, but it isn't, from the various web pages I read, always as noticeable as it is in lighter-skinned people. The pages for "Cassandra" and "Zhan Tiri" on the Tangled wiki were helpful, along with the Villains Wiki page for Cass. I used different definitions of hacker here, to add to the confusion Cass is feeling, and the page for Player on the Carmen Sandiego Wiki for other information. I'm assuming, with this fic, that Elena of Avalor, Sofia the First, and Tangled are all in the same realm. I mean, why not? Lastly, I used the International Gem Society's "Moonstone Symbolism" page for the ending part. I will probably try and add more symbolism in a later possible continuation of this story, if I choose to write it and this fic really catches on.

I was thinking, originally, of making this fic a slow burn. Perhaps it sort of has some characteristics of that. I could see Cass and Carmen connecting to each other early on. I didn't think I could write how much I did for this story, but here we are. Inspiration for locations and such is the eighth chapter of great fic entitled "Sandiego's Seven". Funny enough, I wrote much of this fic before I moved into my new place which... has a sunroom! I don't use that sunroom very much, as it is often too bright but is still nice to have it.

Update on 4/17/26: In my original opening A/N I said: "I further changed the link on the ochaopt.org site, so it includes all the situation reports about the Gaza genocide, rather than a specific report. It is disturbing that since I wrote this original fic, this awfulness is still going on." In the version of this fic on a certain site below, I removed the direct mention of this in the text, specifically the below section in a failed attempt to be respectful to a certain user. However, that did not work. I'm NOT doing that here. I re-added the section:

"She was not aware that in this world, thousands of miles away, in a densely populated land strip, thousands of people were being murdered by a militarily superior force in continually acts of genocide. These brutal attacks resulted in massive displacement and a shattered society. This was paired with the spread of disease, electricity blackout, food insecurity, and only three crossings, on land, allowing people to come and go. This now-hellish place, known as Gaza, was many times worse than anything she had caused in Corona. The same people aimed to do the same to those living in a country with beautiful fertile coastal plains

and mountain ranges, named Lebanon or Iran after mountains and ancient written inscriptions."

This fic originally posted on Sunset, a femslash fanfic site. However, it was removed when I was sadly perma-banned on April 17th for mishandling interactions with a few users, despite apologizing to those users, removing certain passages of fics, and apologizing to the Sunset admin (and others). As such, I would strongly recommend **against** *anyone* joining that site, or Superlove. Both admins (Melo/Kat for Superlove, Agnes for Sunset) are friends with each other. Those admins are very particular and not in a good way. I find the whole circumstance deeply unfortunate. I wish it could have been resolved a much better way.

I do not want this fic to be lost. I have not included some tags I had on Sunset (like Exclusive to Sunset, Crack Fic, Possible Slow Burn (added "technically slow burn"), Queer Community (used Queer Themes), First Red Moonstone fic on here, Prompt Fill, Sunset's Femslash Refresh 2026, and Other (Male) Characters Are Mentioned). However, other tags I used have been retained. On Sunset, this fic was listed as part of three series: "My Femslash Refresh 2026 Collection", "Catgirls, Tattoos, and Everything Nice: My Assorted SPOP Fics" and "From Blonde Hair to Catgirls: My Tangled Fics."

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